



Civilian Personnel

MERIT PROMOTION PLAN

NOTE: This instruction applies to Air Force Reserve units, but does not apply to Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) gained Air National Guard units.

Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System (CIPMS) appointments are excepted by statute under 10 U.S.C. 1590. Authority for the CIPMS Merit Promotion Plan (CMPP) is contained in DoD 1400.34-M. This CMPP applies to all permanent civilian employees serviced by Civilian Personnel Division (HQ AIA/DPC) except Senior Intelligence Executive Service (SIES), Senior Intelligence Professional (SIP), and other serviced organizations with a separate Merit Promotion Plan. This Plan also applies when competitive procedures are applied to selections for training.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

The format of the CMPP is changed from a regulatory supplement to facilitate the reduction of regulatory supplementation within the Air Force, and to provide a stand-alone document for users. The CMPP specifically identifies Title 10, U.S.C. as the appointing authority used for CIPMS positions. The CMPP identifies DoD 1400.34-M, AFI 36-1101, AFMAN 36-203, and AIA supplementation as the regulatory basis for actions taken (para 1). Changes include: an employee may not be referred for promotion when clearance or access is suspended, revoked, or under adjudication (para 2d); managers and supervisors are responsible for the movement of employees into and between CIPMS positions (para 2h); states that competitive processes authorized in the competitive service are also authorized under this plan (para 3); states that the availability of non-competitive authority does not preclude the use of the competitive process (para 3b); identifies actions for which non-competitive procedures are authorized (para 4); training plans and agreements that provide for promotion before normal quality requirement is met are subject to higher level approval (para 4c); changes the requirement to submit SF-52 for details of more than 30 days to details of more than 120 days, advises employees to submit AIA Form 172, **Civilian Personnel Update/Amendment To Official Personnel Folder Or Merged Records Personnel Folder**, or equivalent for details of less than 120 days (para 5); provides that temporary promotions may be made permanent without competition when the employee is otherwise eligible for noncompetitive promotion (para 6); areas of consideration may be organizational, geographic, or based on categories of positions, the minimum area of consideration for GS-13 and 14 positions is all serviced activities (para 8) requires that the reason for deviating from normal recruiting be documented in the Job Placement Folder (para 11); applicants entitled to veterans preference for appointment will be so identified on the referral list, referral lists will identify Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) numerical objectives, the use of the Alternate Certification Procedure does not require the issuance of a referral list (para 12); deletes the requirement to interview all promotion candidates when one is interviewed (para 13); omits the requirement that the use of panels be approved by HQ AIA/DPC (para 14); advises that supervisors are responsible for the integrity and retention of documentation necessary to validate personal interviews, and deletes the requirement for HQ AIA/DPC approval when the cost of personal interviews is funded by the organization (para 16); identifies the approvals required for certain selections (para 17); includes that payment of permanent change of station (PCS) costs for positions below GS-11 must be approved by HQ AIA/DPC (para 21); deletes the requirement to provide priority referral for missed consideration (para 22).

1. Introduction. To provide equitable and efficient procedures for the referral and placement of covered employees and applicants for covered positions. This plan is used in conjunction with DoD 1400.34-M, DoD Civilian

Intelligence Personnel Management System (CIPMS); AFI 36-1101, *Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System*; AFMAN 36-203, *Staffing Civilian Positions*; and AIA supplementation.

2. Key Principles.

- To take full advantage of all CIPMS and excepted service authorities.
- To identify, qualify, evaluate, and select candidates without regard to political, religious, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying physical handicap, or age.
- To establish minimum areas of consideration to provide management with an adequate number of high quality candidates from which to choose, and to provide for flexibility as needed to promote efficiency of the placement process.
- All qualified permanent employees within a designated area of consideration are considered eligible for promotion, except; 1) employees occupying formal trainee positions will not be considered for other formal trainee positions in the same or lower targeted grade as the position occupied; 2) those employees having a current performance appraisal rating of less than fully successful, and 3) an employee may not be referred for positions requiring security clearance during the time his or her security clearance and access has been suspended, revoked, or is under adjudication.
- CIPMS qualification standards and criteria will be used when available.
- In the absence of CIPMS qualification criteria, OPM qualification standards will normally constitute the minimum qualification requirement for appointments, promotions, and reassignment or change-to-lower grade to positions with known promotion potential. Exceptions may be approved by HQ AIA/DPC when determined to be in the best interest of the mission and merit principles.
- Minimum education, certification, and license requirements contained in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) qualification standards apply to covered positions unless superseded by a CIPMS standard.
- Managers and supervisors are responsible for the movement of employees into and between positions by accurately prescribing the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) required for positions and evaluating the qualifications of individuals referred by HQ AIA/DPC for positions.
- Management has the right to select or nonselect from among a group of high-quality candidates. Candidates and applicants from various sources may be considered concurrently.

3. **Competitive Actions.** Any competitive process authorized in the competitive service is allowed. Normally the Air Force Promotion and Placement Referral System (PPRS) will be used to identify and rank Air Force candidates for competitive placement. Exceptions to the use of PPRS will be approved by HQ AIA/DPC or designee. Applications may be accepted from applicants outside Air Force. Non-Air Force promotion candidates will be ranked with Air Force candidates unless it is not possible to determine rank order. If rank order within a progression-level factor (PLF) cannot be determined, DPC will refer these candidates on a separate referral list when they meet or exceed the same PLFs as the lowest ranking Air Force promotion candidate referred.

- When the area of consideration is at least Air Force wide and fewer than five fully qualified candidates are identified, candidates who would attain full eligibility within 30 days of the date of the promotion certificate may be certified.
- Appointments resulting from external recruitment as defined in AFI 36-1101, para 3.7, will be based on competitive procedures unless the reason for exception meets the criteria specified in the AFI. A personnel action for which non-competitive placement authority is provided does not preclude the use of competitive procedures.
- Authority for determining applicability of the competitive process is HQ AIA/DPC.
- Employees assigned to AIA from outside the Air Force are to be given a performance appraisal at the end of 90 days after entrance on duty. (The completed appraisal form, signed by the supervisor, must be

received in DPC no later than 105 days to ensure consideration for positions for which the employee is qualified, if otherwise entitled to consideration).

- Registers of eligibles (including PPRS Candidate Referral Roster) will normally be updated at least every 3 months to allow for the entry of new employees or those with newly acquired qualifications or awards.
- Vacancy announcements may be used to identify candidates for trainee positions, or in other instances as determined by HQ AIA/DPC. When vacancy announcements are used, AIA employees must apply according to instructions contained in the announcement to receive consideration. Supervisors are responsible for submitting an employee's application if the employee will be absent from duty during the open period of the announcement and has clearly advised the supervisor of his or her wish to be considered for such a position. Applications received after the closing date specified in the announcement are excluded from consideration unless the reason for late submission is determined to be acceptable by HQ AIA/DPC and ranking of qualified applicants has not been finalized.

4. **Noncompetitive Actions.** Exceptions to competitive procedures provided in the competitive service are available for use. In addition, an employee may be noncompetitively placed in a position of no higher grade than previously held in the federal service. The higher grade must have been held in a permanent position, except when the proposed noncompetitive action is from a temporary position to another temporary position. An employee may be noncompetitively promoted to succeeding levels within the current band of the employee's present line of work (present line of work must be considered specialized experience for the next higher graded position) when: 1) the employee fully meets qualification and quality of experience requirements; 2) affirmative action and equal employment opportunity objectives have been considered in the selection process; 3) the position into which the employee is being promoted has been classified to the next higher grade; and 4) at a minimum, all qualified employees under the same selecting supervisor have been considered. Non-competitive rank-in-person (RIP) promotions are also authorized. Refer to AFI 36-1101, Attachment 3.

- To request noncompetitive promotion of an employee occupying a formal trainee position, supervisor submits Standard Form 52, **Request for Personnel Action**, AIA Form 101, **Supervisor/Trainee Report of Training Progress Approved Training Program**, and AIA Form 139, **Supervisor's Evaluation of Trainee for Promotion Consideration**, (according to instructions in the training plan) to HQ AIA/DPC.
- Employees occupying formal trainee positions may be promoted when all of the following conditions are met:
 - are not prevented from promotion by statute or regulation;
 - have completed all training and development required to perform the duties of the higher level position as certified by their supervisor, and verified by HQ AIA/DPC;
 - have demonstrated the ability to perform the higher level duties as certified by the supervisor;
 - meet qualification requirements for the higher level position, and
 - normally, have been assigned to the current position at least 6 months.
- Training plans and agreements that provide for promotion before normal quality of experience requirements are met are subject to higher level approval.

5. **Details.** A detail is the temporary assignment of an employee to another position with no change to compensation. Employees need not meet qualification requirements to be eligible for detail, except that minimum education, certification, and or license requirements must be met unless superseded by a CIPMS standard. The employee continues to occupy the position from which detailed. Normally, details will not exceed one year. Examples of reasons for details are: pending fill of a vacant position, to perform work associated with a special project, pending completion of reorganization. The reason for the detail should be documented on SF-52 when submitted to HQ AIA/DPC. Details of 120 days or more for the purpose of providing training will normally be competitive. In other cases the requirement to apply the competitive process applies only to assignments to officially classified positions (or duties identical to those of an officially classified position) at a higher grade, band, or of known promotion potential when the duration of the detail is expected to exceed 120 days and the nature of the assignment is such that the employee can be expected to perform the majority of the grade-controlling duties.

Normally, the minimum area of consideration for competitive detail is all permanent employees under the jurisdiction of the commander or director of the position to which detailed. Supervisor submits SF 52, for details of 120 days or more to assure proper credit for experience gained. Employees document details of less than 120 days by submitting AIA Fm 172 (or equivalent) to the servicing civilian personnel flight with supervisor's written certification of work experience claimed.

6. Temporary Promotion. Refer to AFMAN 36-203, para 2.33. Temporary promotion for a period not to exceed 120 days may be noncompetitive. Temporary promotion for periods of 120 days or more are normally competitive, with a minimum area of consideration of all permanent employees under the jurisdiction of the commander or director of the position to be temporarily filled. A temporary promotion in excess of 120 days may be noncompetitive when the employee is otherwise eligible for noncompetitive promotion to that grade based on another noncompetitive authority. A temporary promotion may be made permanent without further competition when the area of consideration was initially at least equal to the minimum specified in this plan for permanent promotion actions, or when the employee is otherwise eligible for noncompetitive promotion.

7. Developmental Opportunity Program. Developmental opportunity is provided through a variety of sources. These include the structure of career positions (GS-9 and above) to entry level for fill, the Civilian Career Management Program (CCMP), and the AIA Intern Program. Serviced activities identify development opportunities within funded resources. Recruitment sources are determined on a case-by-case basis. Formal training plans are required. Training plans are developed by the owning organization and will be retained on file in HQ AIA/DPC. Training plans will normally be complete and signed by both the organization and the employee no later than the effective date of the action. Changes to training plans during the training period must be approved by HQ AIA/DPC.

8. Areas Of Consideration. Selecting officials will consider needs of the mission, availability of qualified candidates, and affirmative employment objectives when identifying areas of consideration. HQ AIA/DPC will assist by providing recommendations concerning previous sources used, labor market, and established affirmative employment objectives. Areas of consideration may be organizational, geographic, or based on categories of positions, or a combination of these. Areas of consideration may be extended geographically or organizationally, or both, and the extensions may occur simultaneously or successively. For permanent GS-15 (and equivalent) the minimum area of consideration is normally Air Force wide. For GS-13 and 14, the minimum area is normally all serviced activities. For all other positions, the minimum area is normally all serviced activities within the commuting area of the position to be filled. Exceptions to the minimum area of consideration are subject to HQ AIA/DPC approval.

9. Reassignment And Change To Lower Grade (CLG). Employees are not automatically considered for reassignment and CLG to positions without promotion potential, but may request consideration as follows:

- To be considered during the current calendar year, submit a written request through the immediate supervisor to HQ AIA/DPCS. The request is valid until the requested action occurs, or 31 Dec; whichever occurs first.
- To be considered under a specific vacancy announcement apply according to the instructions contained in the vacancy announcement.
- Reassignment and CLG candidates who rank within the same progression level factor (PLF) as the lowest ranking promotion candidate referred will be referred for consideration consistent with their request.

10. External Recruitment (Candidates new to federal service). When considering applicants from outside the federal service, HQ AIA/DPC will normally refer those who meet or exceed the same progression level factor as the lowest ranking Air Force promotion candidate referred.

11. Recruiting. Normal recruiting for the various areas of consideration is as follows: DoD Wide - 4 weeks; Air Force Wide -3 weeks; AIA wide and all serviced activities 2-weeks; and non-federal applicants within the commuting area-2 weeks, outside the commuting area 4-weeks. Reasons for deviation must be approved by HQ AIA/DPC and documented in the Job Placement Folder.

12. **Referral Lists.** Multiple referral lists may be issued concurrently or successively. Air Force Career Program and Intelligence Career Development Program (ICDP) lists are issued in accordance with applicable instructions. On referral lists prepared by HQ AIA/DPC, the names of candidates will be listed in alphabetical order within like groups, for example reassignment candidates. Applicants entitled to veteran preference for appointment will be so identified on the referral list. AIA Form 100, **Promotion Certificates**, will normally contain the names of the 10 top ranked promotion candidates who meet one of the two highest PLFs. When there is a tie among ten ranked employees, up to 15 names may be certified. Ties will be broken by service computation date. When there is an insufficient number of candidates meeting the top 2 PLFs, candidates from lower PLFs may be referred in rank order; however, all candidates certified must exceed basic qualification requirements unless a specific exception is granted by HQ AIA/DPC. Normally, there is no numerical limit to the number that may be referred from sources other than promotion candidates. Referral lists will identify EEO numerical objectives. In instances when the best qualified group has been determined and a candidate the supervisor considers to be the best qualified is among that group, the selection may be made at that time without formal certification. This Alternate Certification Procedure may only be used if the area of consideration is sufficiently wide that an adequate number of high quality candidates could reasonably be expected to surface, the selecting official and the proposed selectee are within the same serviced work force, and the proposed selectee is within reach on the ranked roster and otherwise certifiable to the supervisor for selection. When the alternate certification procedure is used a referral list is not issued.

13. **Consideration.** All candidates referred will be considered except those who specifically decline consideration for that position. As a minimum, candidates will be considered through records review. Supervisors may use either exchange of information or formal interview, but not both, to further differentiate among those candidates (regardless of recruitment source, for example promotion, applicant supply), who rank highest after the records review. The supervisor will document the method of consideration on the referral certificate.

14. **Ranking and Selection Panels.** Panels may be used when management determines that the use of a panel will better serve the interests of the organization. Selecting officials must provide HQ AIA/DPC the names, position titles, and grades of panel members prior to convening the panel. Panels will normally consist of 3 to 5 members. The inclusion of a HQ AIA/DPC representative as an advisor to the panel is normally optional.

15. **Awards.** Selecting officials must consider available awards data on each certified promotion candidate during the selection process. Consideration will be based on relevancy of the awards to the position being filled as determined by the selecting official.

16. **Personal Interviews.** When formal interviews are conducted, questions must be preapproved by HQ AIA/DPC. All interviewed candidates will be asked the same interview questions. Interviews may be conducted telephonically when the candidate is not within the commuting area or otherwise available for interview. Supervisors are responsible for the integrity of interviews, and for retaining sufficient documentation to validate the interview if necessary. Supervisors may, with sufficient justification, request payment of travel expenses from a central fund to conduct an interview for positions critical to mission accomplishment. Such positions will normally be supervisory or managerial at the GS -12 or higher, or senior specialists at the GS-13 or higher level, and normally be limited to no more than two candidates per position. Submit written requests for funding for interviews through commander or director to HQ AIA/DPC for approval or disapproval; include estimated travel costs. Requests will be considered subject to availability of funds and compliance with this policy. Requesting organizations will be responsible for preparing travel orders and will assure submission of paid travel vouchers to HQ AIA/DPC. Disapproval of centrally-funded travel requests does not preclude organizations from funding costs from their organizational travel budget.

17. **Selection.** A supervisor may select any candidate referred regardless of recruiting source. Selection is documented in writing and returned to HQ AIA/DPC for further processing. Selection for a GS-15 or above position is subject to the Commander (HQ AIA/CC) approval. Written justification and approval by the organization commander or director is required when the proposed selection is of a non-preference veteran and there are preference veterans on the referral list, and when the proposed selectee does not meet an EEO numerical objective and there are candidates referred whose selection would meet a stated objective. Requests to waive the 180-day waiting period for military retirees must be endorsed by the organization commander or director, and submitted to HQ AIA/DPC. Higher level approval will be requested by HQ AIA/DPC as required.

18. **Notification.** In all cases the selection process must be reviewed and validated by HQ AIA/DPC before the proposed selectee is notified. Normally, HQ AIA/DPC will notify the selected individual. Initial notification is for a tentative selection pending satisfactory results of preemployment requirements. Selecting officials may with the concurrence of HQ AIA/DPC notify and coordinate the effective date for an internal (served by HQ AIA/DPC) selectee. Only HQ AIA/DPC has the authority to notify external selectees, and will coordinate effective dates through the servicing civilian personnel flight.

19. **Nonselection.** A selecting supervisor must notify all candidates referred and nonselected, except those who have declined consideration after referral. Notification may be verbal or in writing. Method of notification to be used must be documented on the AIA Fm 100 when returned to HQ AIA/DPC; however, notification should not be made until HQ AIA/DPC has validated the selection, and the position has been offered and accepted.

20. **Effective Dates.** Employees selected for promotion, reassignment, or change-to-lower grade, will normally be released within 20 calendar days after their supervisor is notified of their selection. An extension may be granted if both supervisors agree, but will not normally exceed 10 days. A promotion may be delayed to give an employee a within-grade increase, but the delay will not exceed the second pay period after the promotion is approved. Such actions cannot be made retroactively to increase the right of the employee to compensation unless there is a specific authority for the earlier date in law or regulation.

21. **Travel And Transportation Expenses.** Normally, payment of permanent change of station (PCS) costs is limited to GS-11 and above. However, HQ AIA/DPC may approve exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Payment of PCS costs is in accordance with provisions of the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR).

22. **Employee Grievances.** Employees who are dissatisfied with the application of this merit promotion plan, either by management or HQ AIA/DPC, including application of qualification requirements or ranking procedures, may file a grievance under the Air Force grievance procedure. Nonselection from a certificate or list of properly rated and ranked candidates is not grievable.

23. **Documentation.**

- HQ AIA/DPC will retain documentation necessary to reconstruct competitive and noncompetitive placement actions for two years.
- Employees must keep their Official Personnel Folder and Merged Record Personnel Folder (OPF/MRPF) current to ensure proper consideration. Submit updates to experience, education, and training to HQ AIA/DPC. Only updates that have been properly verified and validated may be included in the OPF/MRPF. Employees may obtain a copy of their automated career brief upon request.

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